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ABSTRACT

Intended for parents, the document focuses on dealing with the problems involved with having a learning disabled child in the home. Sections cover the parents' role, comfortable sibling relationships, guidelines for dealing with the child, strengthening the abilities of the child, coping with frustrations of the child, social expectations, and discipline. It is concluded that if parents accept the limitations that go along with the child's handicap they will enhance his learning by cooperation between home and school. (SBH)

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HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR LEARNING DISABLED CHILD IN THE HOME

By

Joan Maki

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Preface

It is in the interest of parents that this paper has been designed in layman's language, so that educators, psychologists, doctors and parents alike may have a basis of communicating with each other concerning the role of the family in dealing with the learning-disabled child.

As parents become knowledgeable about learning disabilities, self-confidence will develop and they will be able to cope with the day to day crises and perplexing situations that arise in the home. It is hoped that this paper will provide insight and understanding of the LD child's problems, his effect on various family members, and provide strength to parents who want to create a harmonious home life for the family of the learning disabled child.

The work is based not only on the reference material listed in the bibliography but on personal interviews with many parents of learning disabled children. The author is also presenting some personal views as she is the parent of a learning disabled child.

Reference to the learning disabled child as "he" is due the fact that nearly 85% are boys.

Introduction

Every child has a right to learn. Yet all children learn differently. They (the learning disabled) too can succeed, but it will be a much harder walk through the pathways of formal education.

The definition for learning disabled (LD) children has been put into layman's language by the Kiwanis Club of America. It describes LD as "those disabilities which prevent the children of above and normal intelligence from progressing at the customary pace of school classes or from efficiently responding to usual teaching techniques employed in todays public schools." The Kiwanis Club uses Ellingson's (1967) coined phrase referring to children with learning disorders as "The Shadow Children."

The child doesn't know why he can't learn or why he can't live up to the expectations of his parents and teachers. Some have a disability that is not obvious and usually, even if discovered, is not fully understood. He is often ignored or accused of being lazy and uncooperative. Because he appears normal, society cannot see his problems.

Each child has his own set or combination of problems and circumstances. No two are identical Each child is an individual and should, indeed must, be treated as such.

Brown (1969), states:

> *By the time a child is recognized to have neurological learning disabilities, the parents and child may be defeated, confused, and angry. It may be a relief when the parents realize that he is acting the way he is not because of malevolence, hostility, or viciousness, but rather from disturbed neurological controls. The child has a treatable illness; he is not simply resisting authority or just being stubborn. His behavior is not planned, and is not logical or predictable. He may be as dismayed by his personality and performance as anyone, perhaps more so.*

Ellingson (1967) feels the label of Learning Disabled is not the end of the world for either the parents or, more important, the child. With appropriate education, and proper parental attitudes, the child will progress, slowly to be sure, to productive adulthood. In this process the main burden falls on the parents rather than the child or his teachers. It is their ability to overcome their feeling of dismay, to ignore for the time being their sense of expectancy for achievement from the child, that will make the greatest difference. Above all, parents should remember not to rush, time is in the child's favor.

The self concept of the child is lowered each year his disability goes untreated, so that by the time he starts to receive professional help he may have a low opinion of himself. If, rather than ignoring signs, parents accept the limitations of their child and seek out help they will avoid many behavioral problems that result from the lack of understanding the child,

The Parents' Role

According to Ellingson (1967), parents react in a variety of ways when confronted with the fact that their child has a learning disorder; some cry or become depressed, some blame themselves, others act totally defeated. For some strange reason Americans place learning disorders in a category that seems to reflect on their moral ideals, their standing in the community, their family and personal image--a whole complex of reactions--none of which has anything to do with the problem. Ellingson emphatically pronounces "no martyrs, nor the guilt-ridden or belligerent (parents) are needed."

Parents must learn to cope with the feeling of guilt, shame or sorrow and find ways of expressing these pent-up emotions. These are normal feelings which most parents of handicapped children encounter. Another aspect of the parents' ability to cope, says Meadow (1971), is with the responses of pity, rejections and avoidance from neighbors; learning to cope with responses of grief and denial from relatives; learning to cope with the temptation either to over-protect or to underprotect the child; and learning to cope with the emotional problems that may develop in relation to the disability.

Parents' blame of themselves for having caused or aggravated the child's problem is often increased when grandparents or family friends, who mean well, suggest that the parents don't know how to handle the child properly. Society's judgment is often criticism of the parent--what could be easier? The most common method of handling this is to hold it all inside and forgive their thoughtless remarks. But after interviewing with parents who have felt the hurt of these careless comments, one wishes there were some way that society as a whole could be educated about the complexity of learning disabilities and the behavior problems that seem to accompany the child, particularly as he grows older.

Emphasize and interpret the child's needs to all of the people who are near and dear to the family and especially to those who briefly pinch-hit for parents such as neighbors, babysitters and the parents of his close friends. If they understand the child's problem they will not be apprehensive about him.

There is no reason to expect that parents of learning disabled children are automatically equipped for the specialized task of bringing up such a child in a manner best suited to his disability. The parents' natural hurt and despair following the diagnosis is normal, but by understanding the nature of the problem they can then go about the task of finding professional help for the child and creating a comfortable homelife situation that emphasizes love, serenity, and structure.

Brown (1969), says:

> *A child is lucky if he can be around people with abundant patience, understanding (not sentimentality), optimism, and ingenuity. Ideally, the important people who decide expectations will keep them in line with the child's abilities, not base expectations on what the family has "always wanted" for the child (or for themselves). Parents must forget the child they dreamed about; they must deal with a real, flesh-and-blood person."*

The first step, (Ellingson 1967), involves the complete acceptance of the child and his learning handicap. Before the child can learn to accept himself and achieve the inner controls necessary to overcome his problem, his parents must acquire their own set of inner controls.

Learning disabled children need individual attention, love and help in developing a feeling of an individual sense of worth. In spite of their handicap they can become happy, well adjusted children. Educators can help a child to learn, but it is the parents who have to make him whole, happy, and secure in the knowledge that he is loved.

Keep channels of communication open within the family. Parents must talk with each other, try to see each other's point of view, and respect each other's efforts to help their child. Instead of pulling in different directions, they must work together in a joint effort.

Don't get so caught up in the child's life that you lose sight of your own interests outside the home. Keep an active social life. Involve yourselves in recreation and community affairs. A competent sitter can provide for the child so that the parents may enjoy a normal, fulfilling life.

Counseling on an individual and/or group basis has proved helpful to many parents. Caution is suggested as to the type of counseling that is most healthy for the entire family when consulting professional help. Do not forget to share with other parents your feeling of frustration. The informal hashing-out of "everyday problems of living with an LD child" helps any parent's emotional stability. And without the parent's ability to remain stable there is no reaching the child himself.

Advice given by parents to other parents is "don't be ashamed." Educate others by talking about your child's problems and your own ability to cope with the child's problems. Somehow, somewhere, sometime your words will find the ears of someone whose child is also with learning disorders and you can assist them on the road to finding help for their child...early..before behavior problems are established.

Comfortable Sibling Relationships

We all know in our own families that "no man is an island" and what affects one member of a family will most likely, to some degree, affect the others. The reaction of siblings may not be dramatic, perhaps not even obvious, but the latent and long term effects should be considered. According to Parfit, 1974, there are three (3) needs of the sibling of a handicapped child. They are: information, emotional help, and education.

Information, the facts of existence, nature and cause of the handicap can be "simply" explained to older brothers and sisters in as clear a way as possible, having regard to their age. Answer all questions from the sibling as honestly and straight forwardly as possible.

Emotional reactions can be brought into the open through discussion and conversation. There is the problem of jealousy. This needs to be put into words, accepted, and ways found to deal with it. Guilt is another problem which must be dealt with. Perhaps the sibling is embarrassed about the learning disabled child. Hostility repressed will be harder to deal with in adulthood, so it would be far more healthy to bring the feelings of all siblings out into the open. To spoil, indulge or over-protect a handicapped child will cause resentment amongst siblings. Siblings should be helped to talk this over and share in family discussions of how to avoid unpleasant behavior. Often children are very sensible and sensitive to these matters.

The third need is for education. The older and normal children need to be shown what they can do to help. Make siblings feel really important. Cooperation amongst all household members lead to happy, confident futures for LD children.

Kronick (1969), discusses sibling jealousy, a problem which she says is quite normal, and parents need to face this situation. She senses two common dilemmas that creep into family living with an LD child. One, "Should a younger child forge ahead of the LD child in school?" Her answer is to allow every child to be allowed to develop to his capacity. We cannot hold back a child because his sibling does not possess an equal degree of talent. Her possible solution would be to have children attend different schools.

The second problem is the sibling's resentful feelings of the time spent thinking, worrying, and being preoccupied with the LD child. Are all of your children having time with you? The most obvious solution in dealing with this will come with father and mother being cooperative about household chores and time spent with children...all children in the household.

Kronick (1969) suggests that helping a child to cope with his learning disability can be a family project. Recognition as a deserving individual is a right to which each child is born. Every child needs to feel appreciated, accepted, loved, and free of anxiety.

Guidelines for Dealing with the Child

Brutten (1973), writes that learning disabled youngsters need firmness, consistency, and clarity more than other children do. This means that an orderly, calm lifestyle is what gives them a base of security. Brutten also suggests that boundaries be set, as any child will test limits and see how far he can go. Without boundaries, an LD child becomes confused and will demand more and more license to do as he pleases. When the clamps are finally put on him, he won't know what hit him, and he may erupt violently. Rules of the house are to be adhered to by all family members and the LD should be no exception. Tell him what the consequences will be if he does not obey rules, and follow through...don't let yourself be swayed by his wiles. If a child senses his parents are wavering, he could provoke serious family problems. Siblings will resent preferential treatment and this will break down the relationships within the family. It is very important with LD children that they clearly <u>understand</u> the rules and the penalities for infractions.

All children, and particularly LD kids, learn best by practice in real life situations. The happy feelings of helping at home, handling situations well, and having fun can comfortably and consistently fit into his daily routine. No lectures will be as effective as a demonstration of the activity itself--and then letting him perform it many times.

Brutten (1973) continues: "Parents differ in their standards for doing a job right, so you should decide beforehand how strongly you feel about results. Reward an honest effort that is in the direction of the desired result. Children who are clumsy learn much more when they are free of pressure and criticism."

Don't feel sorry for him and fight his battles. By relying on you, exploiting you, getting everything he wants without effort, his own independence cannot be developed. Fathers are more inclined to allow the child to do things for himself so listen to him when he says, "Let him do it himself." Try to develop some of this detachment. Fathers seem to understand the laws of cause and effect better because of living in a real world. "The child must grow up to be a productive citizen and will need every bit of independence that he can muster up," said one father interviewed.

Basic emotional needs were recently summarized by Illingsworth (1968):

> *These include love and security; firm, loving discipline; acceptance at all times, however much he misbehaves or fails to come up to his parents' scholastic expectations, or whatever personality traits he exhibits; the gradual acquisition of independence; the instillation of good moral values and a sensible attitude toward sex; and encouragement rather than discouragement, with praise for his achievements, however meager they are. It means the avoidance of constant nagging and reprimands, excessive strictness or lack of discipline, and use of sarcasm, scorn, ridicule, and derogation.*

The learning disabled child often must be taught how to live. You can't assume that he will pick up the basic rules of life by himself. You might have to spell things out for him. For example, you should see to it that he gets off to school well fed and appropriately dressed--comfortable with himself. One parent worded it like this, "The best way I can help him to have a good day in school is to send him off with a smile on his face."

Once you get to know his uniqueness as an individual, you'll also be aware of many tasks in which he is competent. Insist that he do the things you know he is capable of doing. Assign him jobs that will be his responsibility. At first you will need to give constant reminders, but he soon will assume greater initiative and self-reliance.

Brutten (1973) states that as parents it is more important to think in the lines of "what's right with my child" not what's wrong with him. An optimistic outlook will not only help the child but make the total home environment more pleasant. These children are not helpless. Do not anticipate helpless behavior. Remember, he will act the way you expect him to act.

Praise is an essential ingredient to the ego. The LD child needs many "ego strokes" daily in order to make him feel worthy and successful. Prevent failure and ensure success by making sure you assign tasks that are within his reach. Have him know exactly what he is to do and how he is to do the task.

Ross (1964) suggests that pressures for achievement should be somewhat lifted. Expecting more than the child can accomplish is unrealistic and sure to cause problems. The opposite extreme is over protection resulting from unrealistically low expectancy. Parents should be cautioned to refrain from doing for him, anticipating his needs and, instead, encourage self-reliance.

Decision making is often a weakness in LD children. Making decisions for them all their lives is in essence making them helpless. Encourage this skill by giving alternatives, i.e.,"Do you want to wear the green pants or the red pants?" Caution is necessary as the goal is to further his ability to make decisions comfortably, not perplex him with unnecessary choices.

Provide assistance in organizing the child. Help him to organize his time wisely and find more efficient ways of caring for his belongings.

Listen to what he says...have an open mind...understand his feelings. Help to establish a positive attitude about himself. Encourage his endeavors; listen to the cues he gives about a feeling of self-worth and pride in himself. Too often the attitude of "if I don't try, I won't fail" prevails under guises unbeknown to the parents who only "look" at their children and who don't really "see" what their inner frustrations are saying.

There are those who will say, "So many of these guidelines are sound advice for the parents of the normal child. So why make such a fuss about LD children?" Parents keep emphasizing to me how each step in a normal child's life causes enough frustrations to make parents run for advice on how to cope with children. The importance is that the LD's problems are magnified at least tenfold. These kids cannot function normally in learning situations. The "dumb, dumb" phrase is attached so firmly in their minds that they have programmed themselves for failure. Unless those who are near and dear to him, particularly family members, help him to establish guidelines for living and learning, his frustrations could lead him down a road where his learning deficiency will go unnoticed. The extreme number of juvenile delinquents who are LD lead us to believe that every concerned person in society needs to be made aware of the effects of these disturbances and help these children to grow into coping adults.

Let's program these children for success! Brown (1969) summarizes with five guidelines: (1) understand the individual child, (2) structure his environment, (3) set good examples and standards, (4) control with loving firmness, and (5) provide opportunities for success, to build self-esteem.

Strengthening The Abilities of the Child

Brutten (1973), says "All children have abilities. They must be found--each youngster must be made aware of them." Parents must look objectively at their child and see what they truly are. What are his unique personal strengths and weaknesses? Capitalize on these strengths.

Brown (1969) states:

> *Children benefit when parents search for talents with which the child can experience success: Music, art, athletics, collecting, growing things, keeping small animals, camping, hunting, building models, repairing toys or simple appliances. They can be encouraged in big muscle activity that is non-competitive and that can be done without a team of special equipment; swimming is excellent, so is running.*
>
> *Sometimes messy writers can get a sense of success by being introduced to typewriting early. Typing improves word production in an interesting way, and it helps prevent sloppy written work. A tape recorder may help in reviewing school work--using ears rather than eyes.*
>
> *Parents probably should not tutor their children. This applies not only to school subjects, but to skills like swimming, dancing, driving, and other "formal" activities. Parents should be loving, benign governors, not drill instructors. Parents teach many informal things to their children, but they do it by setting examples and standards, and by providing motivation, opportunity, and encouragement. Parents can help by giving an attentive ear, an encouraging attitude, a reduction of pressure, and an atmosphere free of comparisons of this child with others.*

Polick (1970), suggests playing games that require thinking and language. Remember the key to learning is understanding the language.

Communicate...relate <u>with</u> the child. There is a difference between talking to your child and talking with him. Listen to him. Sometimes parents are prone to just responding indifferently because they are busy with other tasks. If parents don't have the time to listen, the LD child will stop talking and then all lines of communication will be stopped.

Don't spend your time correcting his speech. It will be another reason to withdraw from talking with you. Do, however, use proper language in your responses.

Don't force things until they are ready. Remember the rate of maturation for LD children is slower than normal. It doesn't really matter if the child learns to ride a bike at five or at eight.

Expose him to environmental opportunities. Provide him with a responsive environment. Develop concepts and understandings without putting demands on him. Encourage meaningful activities.

"The real remedial work for a child with a learning disability goes on at home," writes Mrs. Margaret Polick (1970), a psychologist at Montreal Children's Hospital.

> *"The learning disabled child will discover self-respect when encouraged to do things in which he can succeed. Parents are the most important guide this or any child can have. Not in academic instructions. But you can work in areas that intrigue him: building models, care of animals, cooking, whatever happens to be part of your family style. Only the home can provide the variety, the repetition, the relevance that the child needs. Parents can make mealtime, bedtime, a drive in the car, a trip to the supermarket and ordinary household activities into meaningful teaching situations... If mother or father takes the trouble to teach some of the skills involved in cleaning, cooking, shopping, gardening, there is an ideal opportunity to develop visual plus auditory perception, finger dexterity, to teach order, logic, math, to sharpen a child's ability to use language... Involvement in the life of the household gives a feeling of competence that can help to counteract the sense of failure instilled by lack of success in school."*

Coping With Frustrations of the Child

The "failure syndrome" as noted by parents: "the label of 'dummy' is hard to shake." When the child has heard this word along with "lazy and uncooperative" year after year it seems inevitable that he goes on with the feeling that "If I don't try, I won't fail"...or otherwise resorts to behavioral problems to release his pent-up emotions.

These children can be easily discouraged and given to great sadness about their incapabilities. From the younger years, on up into teenage life, they will literally "cry a lot" (Ellingson, 1967). He also points out how factors of forgetfulness, impulsiveness, and inability to remain with a task can make learning a nightmare for the child.

You can help to combat his distractibility according to Stewart (1973), by teaching him how to divide work into small units and by training him to ignore distractions. When he's working on any task requiring concentrated effort, (homework, model building, household chores) he will do much better if his work is divided into small units and if he gets immediate feedback

for completing one unit at a time. Encourage him to show you what he has done after these small segments of work have been completed. Praise him for completing the task. Intersperse his work with periods of play or taking a snack break. Then check his work and send him back to do another limited job. Gradually your child will learn to work for longer periods of time and learn a little about budgeting his time.

If sounds easily distract, put a loud ticking clock in his room. Call his attention to its presence and then tell him to perform some task, maybe homework or a puzzle. Gradually extend the time he has to attend---then later substitute other distractions like a softly playing radio, a music box, etc.

He needs to learn to finish tasks even if a period of days go by. If he never finishes anything, he will never experience the reward of fulfilling a specific aim. The gratification of completing a job is an important reward for persistence, and parents can help by persisting to help him achieve this end.

The preclusion of emotional swings of excitability and apprehension call for prevention rather than scolding after the event. The keys to prevention are avoidance of situations that produce extreme excitement, preparation for situations that cannot be avoided, and recognition of an impending emotional upset.

Avoid direct confrontations, especially about trivial things. A child may fall apart over an unexpected change of plans. You can prevent disaster by discussing future plans, but try not to tell about upcoming events too far ahead of time or he'll pester you to death. Pestering stems from his impatience. You can do your discussion of future plans hedging with eventualities. Providing step by step plans of new experiences helps to provide some measure of security.

Impatience and impulsiveness, according to Stewart (1973), are also prevalent in many LD children. Help them through these emotional strains by accepting the fact that they cannot always control their behavior. Coping with frustrations requires time and patience on the part of parents.

Havercamp (1970) tells us how emotional instability is also a common characteristic. A child may over-react to emotional situations such as parties, trips, special events or any unanticipated change in routine. Frustration, disappointment and failure may produce any number of reactions. Under the pressure of testing he may often react in unpredictable ways...maybe laugh, or cry or become withdrawn. Pressure situations should be avoided whenever possible.

Parents report that harboring the feeling of inadequacy brings on much emotional frustration for the child. The child wonders <u>why</u> he can do some things well and needs special help in other areas. Secretly he might wonder if he is mentally retarded or deficient in some way. All the talk in the world cannot convince him that he is not retarded if the "failure syndrome" has been ingrained. Indication of this is common among LD adolescents, and counseling is definitely recommended.

Social Expectations

Involvement is a basic social need for both the child and his family. Search out for interests that are to his liking, and help him to become involved. The need to help others is strong amongst LD children. They love to teach but need an extra boost to get into the situation. Encourage opportunities where he can "help others" as well as to become confident of himself in social situations.

Peer group relationships are as wide and as varied as his learning disability. Some have trouble retaining friendships, particularly if one of their characteristics is an inability to cope with the extremes of emotions. Parents reflect that there is no set pattern in the LD's way of handling social problems. "They are so sensitive, yet so hardheaded." All of the normal problems of adolescence seem to be magnified ten times.

Havercamp (1970) notes one personality characteristic of "guilelessness; all trusting and gullible, often the goat of the crowd." Parents see this happening to the child; they see how he is easily led, sometimes picked up by an "out crowd" just because he is desperate for friends.

Social immaturity is an LD personality characteristic observed by Havercamp (1970), which is most likely a reflection of his particular learning disorder. His peers may not accept him, exclude him in the early years of socialization therefore leaving him with little social experience. Social immaturity stems from the inability to make social judgments. He may misunderstand meanings conveyed by the tone of voice and by overt actions. He cannot "size-up" a situation and adapt to it, nor can he anticipate the consequences of his own behavior. He needs guidance in learning to communicate on a non-verbal basis.

Discipline

Discipline is necessary. Learning disabled children must be corrected, but do not put them down as human beings! Parents must share the responsibility for helping the child to solve his special behavioral problems. Brutten (1969) suggests a good question to ask yourself, is this: "When does his behavior stop and my reaction begin?"

The usual impulsive and unexplained acts of children with learning disabilities calls for patience, understanding and common sense. Be prepared to accept the absent-minded characteristic, for they are not willfully disobeying or being stubborn. It is difficult for many LD's to keep the many things we expect them to remember at the forefront of consciousness.

Many seem to "never hear" or to ignore parents' directions. Often these children do not process multiple requests quickly or accurately. Brown (1969), says:

> *Punishment should be prompt. Delay causes the child to be confused about what he did wrong (and) gives the child a long period of worry and resentment that may be out of proportion to the situation. Let the punishment fit the crime. Do not impose a major punishment for a minor trans-*

> *gression. Don't punish the same behavior with widely different penalties at different times. Avoid long sermons, talk, logical reasoning. Make the handling of the problem direct and simple. Don't demand verbal assurances that he will never do such a thing again. Try to avoid punishments that are violent or lead to great excitement. Don't let your own feelings of anger and frustration distort the situation into something it isn't... Use punishments that involve witholding of privileges or putting the child in quiet isolation. Make clear to the child that you dislike his action, not him... The child usually needs an improved self image, not degradation. Avoid self-defeating threats, bribes, and promises... It is a mistake to be too strict and then too forgiving. Avoid cold anger at one time, then loving embraces soon after. Hold your temper if you want (your) child to learn that temper can be held.*

Physical punishment is rarely good. Physical restraint, presented to the child as your way of helping him to control himself so that he won't hurt himself, is a better idea.

Parents are surprised when told that their teasing is a harsher punishment than any honest beating they might administer. Scorn and derision are not funny. The fact that they are criticizing with laughter makes the criticism more scathing to youngsters, who would rather be told straight out that the parent is angry - and why.

Brown (1969) suggests that:

> *Parents should try to present a <u>united front</u> to a child. They can avoid disagreement and harsh criticism of each other in front of the child. A child realizes he is the product of both his parents, and he feels torn down when either parent is degraded. Rules of behavior should be simple, definite, and unchanging from parent to parent. Rules need not be decided by vote or by popularity contests. They work best if there is a way to check on compliance and the rules are enforceable. If you can't enforce a rule, it may be better not to have it; examples of rules that can't be enforced are those about duration of sleep, conduct at other places when parents are not present, or rules about what the child must think.*

Aspiring parents must avoid trying to give the child all of the things the parent missed while growing up. The child may be better off with fewer things but more consistent limits and standards. When a child has a disability, parents naturally want to make up for his "not getting a fair deal." Lax controls, leniency, and empty pleasures will not balance the scales. A child may interpret lenient and inconsistent discipline as meaning that his parents don't care enough about him to make him act right.

Parents are in charge and there isn't any way out of it. If they don't serve as parents, who will?

Conclusion

It is important to bear in mind, according to Ellingson (1967), that each child has his own set or combination of problems and circumstances. No two are identical. Each child is an individual and should, indeed must, be treated as such. Jumping to conclusions can be disastrous. If your child shows symptoms of learning disabilities, seek out professional help through the school facility, a guidance counselor, psychologist or doctor. Home diagnosis or treatment is in no way sufficient. Learning disorders do have definite patterns and if the child's problem is accurately identified, he can be taught. Professional diagnosis and treatment is vital. Experience has shown that once parents realize their child is not just being "bad-tempered or lazy" they will make every effort to find professional help.

Ellingson (1967), says:

> *Children are as young willow trees. When young, they can be bent, they can bear a lot, and snap back and continue to grow. But the older they get, the more difficult it becomes for them to change. The optimum age for education for any child with a learning disorder is between 5 and 8. He can absorb more at a faster rate than at any other time in his life.*

Cooperation between school and home is essential. If parents accept the limitations that go along with the child's handicap they will enhance his learning by cooperation between home and school.

One final note to parents. A learning disorder is not the child's fault, nor is it yours. It is not the end of the world for you or your child. In fact, the discovery is likely to turn out to be the beginning of a new world for the entire family.

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